

SOLOMON MAHLANGU

Death row youth's mum prays for mercy



SOMEWHERE IN Mamelodi lives a woman who visits the Central Prison in Pretoria every Wednesday and Saturday mornings.

Mrs Martha Mahlangu mother of Solomon Mahlangu who was last year sentenced to death for the Goch Street shooting.

"Everytime I come back from Pretoria Central Prison I have a headache" she said.

"I had great hopes in Solomon. He is the baby of the family and the most educated of all my six children.

"We visit him everyday. The other members of the family visit him on days when I cannot go because I have piece jobs to do trying to earn a living.

"We pray everyday for him and other people have also been upholding him in prayer. Maybe God will hear our prayers and he might get a reprieve."

Mrs Mahlangu then showed us a package of letters, telegrams and cards from all over the world who are also praying for Solomon.

One of the touching letters was from a Mrs Henery of a country in Europe. She is a mother of two sons. It reads:

"I am writing to you as a mother of two grown up sons to wish you all others who are petitioning your government for a reprieve for your son. Every success in your efforts. With greetings and best wishes. Yours sincerely, Mrs Marsh Henery".

In the meantime the petition to the State President has been drawn and the Mahlangu home keeps praying and hoping.

SOLOMON MAHLANGU is a typical product of APARTHEID South Africa. At 21 years, this honourable son of our people had experienced as a black South African, extreme oppression and degradation in the land of his birth. He has suffered the education designed for servitude but like so many of his brothers and sisters he resisted the racist power. He was one of the many student activists fighting the hated Bantu Education system. He was also one of the many, who realising the need for the guidance of the liberation movement turned to the African National Congress and left his country to prepare for battle forced upon our people and movement by the oppressive and brutal system.

Solomon returned to South Africa in 1977. He entered Johannesburg on June 13th, three days before the first anniversary of the Soweto massacre. He and his comrade were stopped by South Africa's racist police in the centre of the city and in the course of their arrest 2 white men were killed.

On the 23rd March, 1978, Solomon Mahlangu was found guilty of "common purposes" and he was sentenced TO DEATH.

" Friends and relatives of the Mahlangu family in Mamelodi this week made a final appeal to South Africa and the State President to save the life of Solomon Mahlangu. The Appeal Court last week rejected an application for a retrial, and time is fast running out for the Mamelodi High student who was sentenced to death for the Goch Street shooting in June 1977. Mahlangu has now spent his 316 days in the death cell as the battle to save his life draws to an end. Every knock may mean the announcement of his last few hours. Several appeals have now failed. Last week's rejection has now sealed his fate. His life is now in the hands of the State President, John Vorster.... One of his closest friends, Mr Badu, said 'Our whole school is prepared to go to jail in exchange for his life. Let His Excellency reprieve him'... Mahlangu's family pray daily for him...."

Post 16.1.79.

" A plea to the State President for clemency is Solomon Mahlangu's last bid to escape the gallows... His lawyers confirmed yesterday that they planned to lodge a petition for clemency this week... Several European countries have appealed to the State for clemency through their diplomatic missions in Pretoria. Various pressure groups... have campaigned to mobilise public opinion to induce their governments to make representation to stop the hanging."

Rand Daily Mail. 16.1.79.

" The Appeal Court in Bloemfontein has refused Solomon Mahlangu leave to appeal by way of special entry on the record of his trial... In July last year the appeal court refused him leave to appeal against his conviction and death sentence, and on Nov 24, 1978, Mr Justice Theron dismissed an application for the noting of a special entry in the trial record that the proceedings at the trial were alleged to be irregular and not according to law. Mr Justice Theron found that..no irregularity was committed. No reasons were given by the Appeal Court for the dismissal of the application."

Rand Daily Mail. 20.1.79.

Department of External Affairs



Canada

Ministère des Affaires extérieures

Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0G2

January 9, 1978

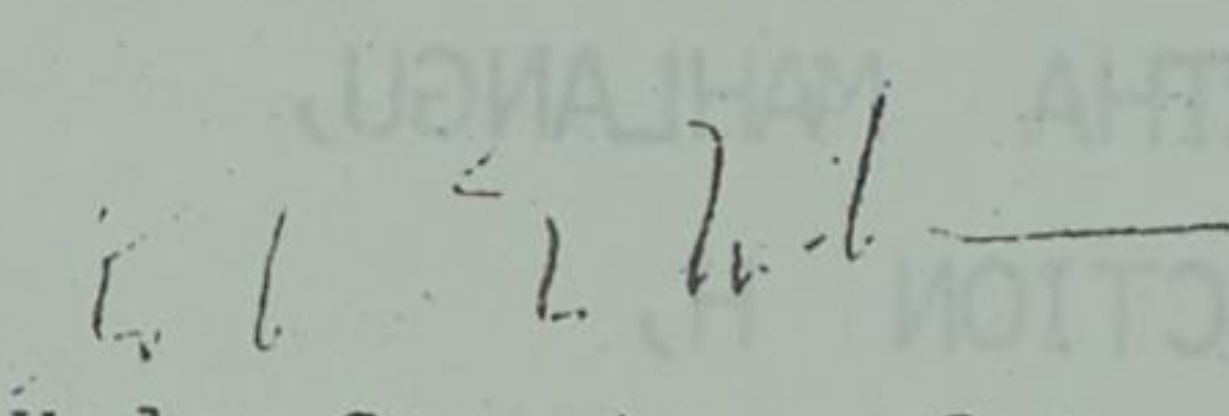
Dear Mr. Penman,

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Don Jamieson, has asked me to reply to your letter of December 21, 1978 concerning Solomon Mahlangu.

Through our Embassy in Pretoria, the South African Government has been made fully aware of the concern of many Canadians about the harsh sentence given to Mr. Mahlangu. You will also want to know that the Commonwealth Secretary-General, Mr. Ramphal, in the name of all Commonwealth Governments, made an appeal on his behalf.

It is hoped that the many representations on behalf of Mr. Mahlangu by concerned governments will be effective.

Yours sincerely,


Under-Secretary of State
for External Affairs

Dr. David Penman,
20 Massey Road,
Regina, Saskatchewan,
S4S 4M7.

A P P E A L !

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TO HELP SAVE MAHLANGU'S LIFE AND COMFORT HIS MOTHER THE
AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS (SOUTH AFRICA) MAKES THIS SPECIAL
AND URGENT APPEAL TO ALL CANADIANS TO SEND LETTERS OR
POSTCARDS AS FOLLOWS:

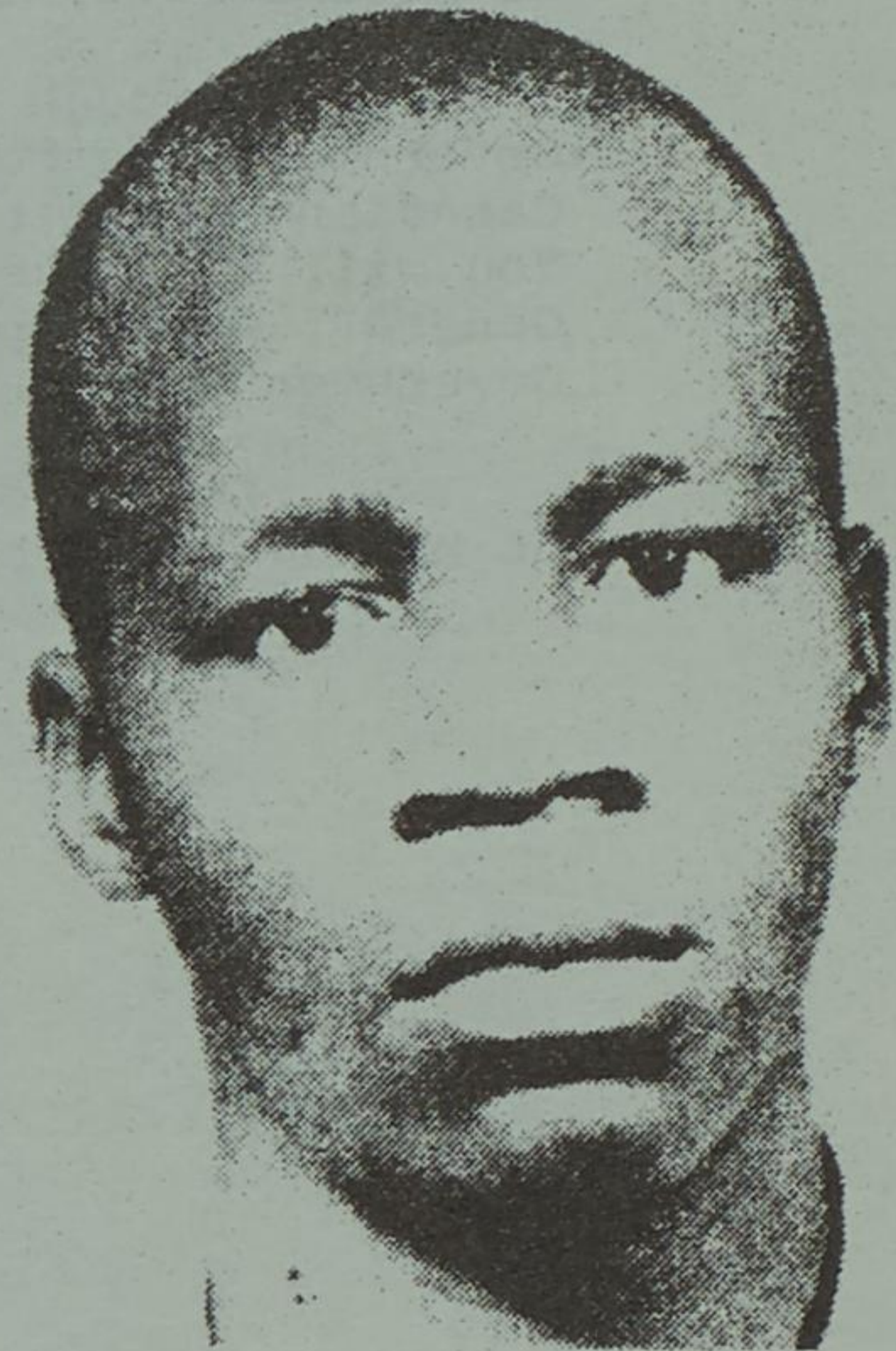
1. THE STATE PRESIDENT,
JOHN B. VORSTER,
UNION BUILDINGS,
PRETORIA,
SOUTH AFRICA,

urging him to grant Solomon a REPRIEVE.

2. TO PRIME MINISTER PIERRE TRUDEAU,
URGING THAT HE APPEAL TO THE SOUTH
AFRICAN STATE PRESIDENT ON BEHALF
OF THE CANADIAN PEOPLE.

3. EXPRESSION OF SYMPATHY AND COMFORT TO
MRS MARTHA MAHLANGU,
2445 SECTION H,
MAMELODI WEST,
PRETORIA,
SOUTH AFRICA.

Stop
the execution of
**SOLOMON
MAHLANGU**



*Demand that he be accorded
Status of the Geneva Agreement
on Freedom Fighters.*

Issued By: AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS OF SOUTH AFRICA,
Box 302, Adelaide Stn, Toronto M5C 2J4, Ont.
Phone (416) 361-0193.